

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Government have to recover an amount of US \$ 147.516 million from the United Nations towards reimbursement, as on October 31, 2006, for India's deployment in UN peacekeeping missions.

(b) The delay in making payments to India and other troop contributing countries is mainly due to some member withholding or delaying their mandatory financial contribution to the United Nations. The Government continues to actively follow up this matter with UN authorities as well as other member state. The Government had also raised this issue in the UN General Assembly and its Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

(c) As on 30 November, 2006, a total of 9256 Indian personnel were serving in various UN peacekeeping mission including 8825 troops, 88 military observers and 343 police official. During the last three years, two Indian soldiers were killed in action while serving in UN peacekeeping missions.

Balancing the interests of Nation

†2455. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the final approval by the Upper House of U.S. Senate to Indo-US civil nuclear agreement, atomic test conducted by North Korea recently and deteriorating balance in Asia are against the interest of the country; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The India-US nuclear understanding as contained in the July 18, 2005 India-US Joint Statement and the March 2, 2006 Separation Plan will help in addressing India's growing energy requirements. India has expressed its concerns about the North Korean nuclear test through a statement by our Officials Spokesperson on October 9, 2006. There is growing appreciation of India's contribution to Asian and global security, which actually advances the interests of the country.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.